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COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES IN ONTARIO

Community Health Centres (CHCs) are non-profit organizations that provide primary health care for individuals, families and communities. They also address other factors that affect wellness, such as education, employment, income, social support, environment and housing.

Current Status in Ontario

CHCs are an important part of the province's primary care renewal strategy, complementing Family Health Teams and other models in place to meet the primary care needs of Ontarians.

There are currently 54 CHCs and 10 CHC satellites operating in Ontario, serving approximately 300,000 active clients. There are 27 CHCs located in large urban centres, 14 in smaller communities and 13 in either northern and/or rural communities.

In November 2005, the government announced \$74.6 million to support a three-year expansion of the CHC program, funding 22 new CHCs and 17 new Satellite CHCs by 2007-08.

Programs Overview

CHCs use a community development approach to health care that ensures Ontarians who face access barriers such as race, language, poverty, physical disabilities or geographic isolation have access to primary health care and community health programs.

The centres have teams of health care professionals including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers and dieticians who deliver a range of services.

The services offered by each CHC vary depending on the needs of the local community. A CHC will identify local needs and then offer programs and services to meet those demands. These can include:

- Primary health care
- Primary mental health care
- Nutrition workshops
- Housing security and homelessness
- Access to employment
- Supports to immigrants and refugees
- Seniors drop-in
- Multi-lingual programming on a variety of topics
- Women's support group

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